



# Did YOU know?

## Communications

Communications from multiple sources need to be synthesized and/or filtered to gain clear situational awareness.

### **Vehicle to Operator and Crew—what is the truck telling you?**

Is the vehicle “yelling” at you? Your vehicle communicates via audible and visual warning devices that monitor the various systems. Do the warning devices match what you’ve actually found or is there a malfunction? Did you check? How is that malfunction being managed?

Are there abnormal sounds, sights, or smells around your vehicle? Learn how your vehicle sounds when idling in neutral versus idling in gear. Listen for the sound of the parking brakes engaging. Notice the sound of a transmission shifting from forward to reverse along with the expected lights and alarm. What does an engaged PTO or generator sound like? Can you look down the side of your vehicle and pick up on open or loose compartment doors? Can you tell at a glance when equipment has shifted or is improperly stowed, i.e. hose loads, ground ladders, or aerial devices?

### **Operator and Crew—everybody on the same page?**

During critical tasks, like driving, it is important that communications include sending, receiving, and verifying the message.

Communications take many verbal and non-verbal forms during driving:

- ⊖ Verbal direction via the headsets, radio, or face-to-face
- ⊖ Visible direction via turn signals, hand motions, brake lights, eye contact and body language
- ⊖ Other audible direction via horn blasts, reverse alarms, tiller buzzers

Verification can be as simple as the operator seeing a crew member positioned as a spotter to as complicated as the operator dismounting the apparatus to gain face-to-face contact to all members switching to talk-around on the radios.

### **Complicated Maneuvers**

Coordination of complicated movements is best done before starting the maneuver and not during. Communications become remarkably harder and less clear in the midst of a maneuver, so pre-plan as much as possible. Operators must avoid unpredictable movements and crew members need to stop the operator when the maneuver becomes unclear or the “body language” of the vehicle deviates from what was expected. A moment spent verifying intentions will save lots of time in the end.

### **Operator and CMF — what defects?**

How often do you check for open defects or previous repairs on your apparatus? Do you check proactively or only reactively when a problem arises? Do you know how to check?